



ERIC WHITACRE'S  
**VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE BEAUTIFUL MESS**

**Student Guide – Curiosity Edition**



## Introduction

In this opening video, Eric tells his story of how he came to be a composer through a non-traditional path. As you view, you may evaluate your own pre-existing ideas about the topic.

Words and ideas to help you stay curious

Baseball player, ninja, dungeon master  
Commodore 64 computer  
Mozart *Requiem*  
Go, *Lovely Rose*

## Discussion, Discovery and Insight

As a young child, what career(s) appealed to you? How have your goals changed since then?

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Eric's first experience in a large college choir affected him profoundly. What experience(s) have you had that affected you profoundly?

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What are some of your creative pursuits? Why do you think you are drawn to these types of activities?

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## Explore the World Around You

1. With only pencil and paper, no electronic devices, go somewhere alone. Over a 10-minute period, sit or stand quietly and observe within a radius of three to five feet, everything that your senses tell you. Write it all down.
2. Did you notice more things than you usually would have? Why or why not?
3. Did anything surprise you? Did you have any particular feelings about what your senses were telling you?
4. If your observations were to be transformed into music, what would be the mood of your composition? Would it be loud or soft? Smooth or choppy? High sounds or low sounds? Complex or simple?
5. Turn your written observations into a picture or diagram.
6. Consider sharing your picture/diagram with someone else. Let them ask you questions. Share the written list with that person and explain how you thought of what to draw and write.

7. For a real challenge, on a different day, expand your picture/diagram into a poem, story, or song. Does it retain the same sensory mood that you noticed when you first created it? Do you feel more open to creativity than you did at first?

## Reflection and Insights

When interacting with this activity, did it happen like you expected? Was there anything that surprised you or did you learn anything you didn't expect? Explain your answer.

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If you did this exploration activity again, what would you do differently, if anything?

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How would you change this activity to better suit your learning style and interests?

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